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(b)(3)

PORTUGAL Américo Deus Rodrigues THOMAZ

President of the Republic

(1968)

Adm. Américo Thomaz was elected President of Portugal in 1958 and unanimously reelected for another 7-year term in July 1965. A longtime friend of the late Prime Minister António Salazar, Thomaz has come to be regarded by some as the guarantor of Salazarist orthodoxy in Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano's policy changes. Since Salazar's death, much of the far right has given its allegiance to Thomaz because of his conservative outlook and his demonstrated constitutional powers.

A man of absolute integrity, the President is widely respected, has few (if any) political enemies, and appears to enjoy to a considerable degree the affection of his countrymen.

rumors that he will not stand for reelection in 1972 are numerous. (b)(3)

Thomaz and the Succession

The office of President of the Republic is primarily ceremonial. The Constitution does, however, give the President sole responsibility for appointing or dismissing the Prime Minister. When Salazar suffered a stroke in 1968, Thomaz--guided by his loyalty to Salazar, his patriotism and his respect for the constitution--was able to control the pace of political events during the 19-day succession period. The dignified way in which he carried out his duties during this difficult period contributed to the smoothness of the transition from Salazar to Caetano, and Thomaz emerged from it with his political position considerably enhanced.

The growing political strength of the President vis-a-vis the Prime Minister was one of the most

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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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Américo Deus Rodrigues THOMAZ (cont.)

important political developments in the period immediately after Salazar's stroke. Since then Caetano's own base of support has grown stronger; nevertheless, the strongly-held views of the power structure--and particularly of Thomaz--will probably continue to limit Caetano's ability to move independently or rapidly in new directions.

Attitude toward the United States

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, Thomaz served as right-hand man to the strongly pro-German Minister of the Navy, Manuel Ortins de Bettencourt. It was during this period that he gained a reputation for being unsympathetic to the United States--a reputation his later behavior belied. Since World War II Thomaz has generally been friendly toward the United States.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

Early Life and Career

Américo Deus Rodrigues Thomaz was born in Lisbon on 19 November 1894. Joining the navy as a midshipman in 1914, he studied for 2 years at the Lisbon Naval School. From 1916 to 1918 he served on transports ferrying Portuguese troops to France, and from 1920 to 1936 he was assigned to the hydrographic service.

From 1936 to 1944 Thomaz was chief of cabinet to Minister of the Navy Bettencourt. During his tenure as chief of cabinet he served as chief of the National Merchant Marine Council, the Commission for the Study and Revision of Statutes for Naval Officers, and the Council of Geographic Missions and Colonial Investigations in the Ministry of Colonies.

As Minister of the Navy from 1944 to 1958, Thomaz made important contributions to the expansion of the navy and merchant marine. He also

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contributed to the reorganization of the navy necessary for its alignment with the defense plans of NATO. [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3) He was promoted to Admiral of the Navy in August 1970.

[redacted] (b)(3)

and it seems likely that he has been seen in person by far more people than Salazar ever was, even though the latter was in office four times as long.

Personal Data

The President is a quiet but forceful man, with the dignity and formality one might expect from a man of his background. An avid sportsman, he enjoys hunting, at which he is an expert, and he has a keen interest in football. He reads English and French, but does not speak either language. He holds numerous Portuguese and foreign decorations.

Family

President Thomaz is married to the former Gertrudes Ribeiro da Costa [redacted] (b)(3) (b)(6) The couple has two daughters.

August 1971

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